

EC chief still Umno member, insists PKR

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By Hazlan Zakaria

PKR today refuted the explanation of defacto Law Minister Nazri Abdul Aziz yesterday that the Umno membership of Election Commission chief Abdul Aziz Yusof had lapsed because of non-payment of annual dues.

"I am drawing on my experience as Umno Youth secretary-general. A person who registers to be an Umno member has to pay two dues. One is the membership fee, you only pay once.

"The other is the annual fee. The annual fee is to allow you to participate in the Umno AGMs," explained PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution, who was Umno Youth secretary-general prior to Anwar Ibrahim's sacking from Umno in 1998.

He argued that even if Abdul Aziz does not pay the annual fee, it does not disqualify him as an Umno member, just that he cannot take part in the Malay party's AGMs.

"That does not deny his membership. That is all."

Saifuddin explained that a member is only considered no longer belonging to Umno if he or she is expelled or writes in to asked to be dropped from the party roster.

At a press conference in Parliament House yesterday Nazri said that Abdul Aziz's membership had lapsed as the latter failed to pay his annual dues for a number of years.

Memo to PM

However, Saifuddin claimed that Nazri's admission that Abdul Aziz is a registered Umno member, albeit one who did not pay his annual dues, strengthened their case against the EC chief for failing to declare his interest in a political organisation when he was appointed to the commission.

He pointed out that Abdul Aziz should have revealed that he was an Umno member in accordance to Article 114 of the Federal Constitution mandating all EC members to declare their affiliations within a three month period after the Agong signed their instruments of appointment.

The EC chief's non-disclosure, argued Saifuddin who is also Machang parliamentarian, is grounds enough for a tribunal to look into the matter.

He disclosed that he had sent an official letter earlier today on PKR's behalf, calling upon the Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to act and start the process of forming the tribunal.

Asked what he intends to do if the PM refuses to do so, he said that they will cross that bridge when and if, they get there.

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